

**Testimony of Erin Drouin, Student Government Association Senator, Eastern Connecticut State University, to Appropriations Committee**

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

Hello, my name is Erin Drouin. And I am a sophomore, political science major, and Student Government Association Senator at what I consider to be the best school in the world.

Eastern Connecticut State University was a school I chose not only for its liberal arts curriculum but because of its modest price. Anyone who knows me can tell you that I love Eastern. I've been afforded numerous opportunities that I don't think I would have received had I gone to a different school. I value my four years here in the highest regard. In just the two years I've been attending, I've worked with some of the smartest minds in academia and have been allowed to thrive. I would hate to think that due to a reduction of funding of higher education, someone like me in the future won't be able to attend my esteemed institution or another school within the ConnSCU system.

Since 2000, tuition and fees at state universities and community colleges have more than doubled. I'm not an economics major, but I don't think that's all inflation. I understand its expansion. Thanks to the funding from the state and from increases, Eastern is now the school I know it as today. We have beautiful facilities and an incredible faculty. But with all great things, improvements can be made. And in order to improve, you need money. However, I'm worried that if the burden of money is placed upon the students, Eastern will no longer be a quality education at an affordable price. And the key to maintaining those two components is state funding.

I'm here, with my peers, advocating for increased funding of the ConnSCU system. I'm asking you to invest in us, our fellow students, and any future students that are looking to avoid the national problem of student loan debt. The beauty of Eastern, schools in the ConnSCU system, and other state universities, is that they are not only producing great thinkers, hard workers, and future leaders; they are producing good state citizens. I'm asking you to invest in us and allow citizens of the state of Connecticut to be well-educated. Please afford us the opportunities to make ourselves better so we can make Connecticut better.